

Fellowship Bible Church
Constitution & By-Laws

Article 1 – Name and Location

1. Fellowship Bible Church takes its name from this Bible passage: “What we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; ... but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” (1 John 1:3,7).
2. Fellowship Bible Church is a Massachusetts 501(c)(3) non-profit religious corporation with its principal offices in Methuen, Massachusetts. The Articles of Incorporation are on file with the office of the Secretary of State of the State of Massachusetts.

Article 2 - Autonomy

1. Fellowship Bible Church is self-governing, free from any external authority or control, with the right of selfgovernment independent from any hierarchy of individuals or organizations¹.
2. Fellowship Bible Church is responsible for its own doctrinal purity and practice, discipline of members, appointing of officers, ordaining men into the Gospel ministry, and determining the extent and method of interchurch cooperation.²
3. Fellowship Bible Church is a local manifestation of the universal Church of Jesus Christ.
4. Fellowship Bible Church submits to the laws of the state of Massachusetts and of the United States of America insofar as those laws do not require disobedience to biblical principle³.

Article 3 - Purpose

Fellowship Bible Church exists to know God, to glorify God, and to make disciples of all the nations. We *worship* Him in our attitude and lifestyles; we *imitate* His character in our daily lives; we *edify* the Body of Christ by faithfully teaching His Word to equip believers for ministry; we promote *unity* in the Body through regular fellowship; and we *evangelize* by faithfully sharing the Gospel.

1 Titus 1:5

2 Matthew 18:15-17; Acts 6:3-5; 13:3; 15:1-30; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5;

1 Corinthians 5:12-6:5; 2 Corinthians 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6; 2 Timothy 2:2

3 Acts 4:19-20; 5:29; Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:11-20

Article 4 – Statement of faith

Section 1. The Holy Scripture

We believe that the Holy Scripture (the Bible) is a complete written record of God's revelation to mankind. We believe that the Bible consists of a total of 66 books (39 Old Testament, 27 New Testament) and is a divine product fashioned by the Holy Spirit, who superintended the human writers. We believe that the Bible is verbally (in every word) and plenary (equally in all its parts) inspired by God; absolutely inerrant in the original documents. Thus, we believe the Bible to be infallible and God breathed. We believe the Bible to be allsufficient and complete, and that God is not giving any new or added revelation (through dreams, prophecy, visions, etc.). We believe in the literal, grammatical-historical method of interpreting the Bible. This method takes the normal or plain meaning of a passage of Scripture, allowing for obvious figures of speech, and it considers each passage in its historical context and in the overall progress of God's revelation from Genesis through Revelation. We reject allegorizing or spiritualizing of Scripture, except where clearly indicated by the Scripture itself (for example Galatians 4:21–31 which personifies Law and Grace). We believe that the Bible is the only, final, and infallible authority for faith and practice in both public and private life.

Section 2. God

We believe that there is but one living and true God, who is Spirit, self-existent, infinite, all knowing, sovereign and perfect in all His attributes⁵. We believe that this one living and true God has revealed to us in His Word that He exists eternally as three persons — Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — and that each is one in essence, equally deserving of worship and obedience⁶.

God the Father

We believe that God the Father is the first person of the Trinity. We believe that in His providence He ordains and disposes all things according to His own purpose and grace⁷. We believe that He is the creator of all things and the omnipotent ruler of the universe⁸. As creator, He is Father to all men, but He is the spiritual Father only to believers⁹. We believe that God is neither the author nor approver of

4 Psalm 19:7-11; John 14:21-23; 17:17; 1 Corinthians 2:7-15; 2 Timothy 2:15; 3:15-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Jude 3; Revelation 22:18-19

5 Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5-7, 21-22; 1 Corinthians 8:4; John 4:24

6 Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; 1 Peter 1:2

7 Psalm 145:8-9; Isaiah 46:9-10; 1 Corinthians 8:6

8 Genesis 1; Isaiah 45:5-7; Romans 11:34-36; Ephesians 3:9

9 Romans 8:14; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 4:6

sin and holds all men accountable for their sin. We believe that God concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men and saves from sin all whom He draws to faith in Jesus Christ¹⁰.

God the Son

We believe that God the Son is the eternal second person of the Trinity and possesses all the divine attributes – He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father¹¹. We believe that God the Father created all things through His Son, Jesus Christ¹². We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ was virgin born¹³, and that He accepted all the essential characteristics of humanity while surrendering only certain prerogatives of deity, but nothing of the divine essence. Thus, Jesus Christ represents humanity and deity in indivisible oneness – the perfect God-Man¹⁴.

We believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to reveal God to man, to provide redemption, and rule over God's kingdom¹⁵. We believe that our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished our redemption through the shedding of His blood in His voluntary, sacrificial death as our substitute on the cross¹⁶. We believe in the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of the Father, where He now mediates as our advocate and High Priest, the only mediator between God and man¹⁷. We believe that He is the Head of the church, which is His Body¹⁸, and that He will one day return to earth to judge all mankind, both the living and the dead¹⁹.

God the Holy Spirit

We believe that God the Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity. He is a divine person who possesses all the attributes of deity and personality (such as omnipresence, intellect, emotions, and will) – He is coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal with the Father and Son²⁰.

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the divine teacher who guided the apostles and prophets, using their unique personalities and

10 John 1:12; Romans 8:14-15; Galatians 4:5; Hebrews 12:5-9

11 John 10:30; 14:9

12 John 1:3; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:2

13 Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Matthew 1:23-25; Luke 1:26-35

14 Micah 5:2; John 5:23; 14:9-11; Philipppians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9

15 Psalm 2:7-9; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 14, 29; Philipppians 2:9-11; Hebrews 2:9-12; 7:25-26; 1 Peter 1:18-19

16 John 10:15; Romans 3:24-25; 5:8; 1 Peter 1:18-19; 2:24

17 Matthew 28:6; Luke 24:38-39; Acts 2:30-31; Romans 8:34; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25; 9:24; 1 John 2:1

18 Ephesians 1:22-23; 5:23; Colossians 1:18

19 Matthew 25:31-46; John 5:22-27; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Corinthians 5:10

20 Psalm 139:7-10; Isaiah 40:13-14; Matthew 28:19; John 16:13; Acts 5:3-4; 1 Corinthians 2:10-13; 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Ephesians 4:30

backgrounds, into all truth as they committed to writing God's revelation, the Bible²¹. We believe that the work of the Holy Spirit in the church age began at Pentecost when He came from the Father as promised by Christ to initiate and complete the building of the Church, the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit is the supernatural and sovereign agent in regeneration, baptizing all believers into that spiritual Body²². His divine activity in this age includes glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ and convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment²³.

We believe that every believer is indwelt by the Holy Spirit from the moment of salvation. We believe that, as the believer's Comforter, the Holy Spirit sanctifies believers, instructs them, and empowers them for service, steadily transforming them into Christ's image and sealing them unto the day of redemption²⁴. We believe that God the Holy Spirit is sovereign in how He chooses to bestow His gifts to believers today, and that He does so with the purpose of edifying and maturing the saints as they serve one another²⁵. We believe that speaking in tongues and other miraculous sign gifts in the beginning days of the church were given to identify and authenticate the apostles as revealers of divine truth and were never intended to be characteristic of the lives of believers during the church age²⁶.

Section 3. Angels

We believe that angels are personal spirit beings created to worship and serve God. We believe that He sends them as messengers of His divine providence and that they are higher than men but should never be worshipped²⁷. We believe that Satan is an angel who was perfect and held an exalted rank, but fell into sin because of his conceit and rebellion. We believe that after his fall he introduced sin into this world by tempting Adam and Eve. We believe that Satan is now the god of this world and the enemy of God and believers, but his defeat was sealed at Calvary and his doom will eventually be realized in God's perfect time²⁸. We believe that demons are angels who fell with Satan; although they are organized and powerful, they cannot indwell believers, and can be resisted with spiritual discipline and prayer.²⁹

21 2 Samuel 23:1-2; 2 Peter 1:20-21

22 John 14:16-17; 15:26; Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13

23 John 16:7-15

24 John 16:13; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:6, 18; Ephesians 1:13; 2:22; 5:18; 1 John 2:20, 27

25 Romans 12:6-8; 1 Corinthians 12:4-11; 2 Corinthians 12:12; Ephesians 4:7-12; 1 Peter 4:10-11

26 1 Corinthians 13:8-10; 14:21-22; Hebrews 2:1-4

27 Luke 1:26; Colossians 2:18; Hebrews 1:14, 2:7; Revelation 5:11-14

28 Ezekiel 28:12-19; John 12:31; 16:11; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:6-7; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 20:1-10

29 Ephesians 6:11-13; Jude 6; Revelation 12:3-4, 9

Section 4. Man

We believe that God created man as the culmination of His creation of the universe in six 24 hour days³⁰. We believe that God created mankind as male and female, in the image and likeness of Himself, but that man does not possess the essence of deity. In contrast to other creatures, however, mankind possesses moral agency and the capacity for communion with God, along with a divine mandate for wise stewardship over creation³¹. We believe that God's design in creating the first couple in a state of innocence and moral purity is that marriage is to be between one man and one woman and that sexual relations are to be confined to the bonds of marriage³².

We believe that man is composed of a corruptible, material part that is temporary and an immaterial, spiritual part that will exist eternally³³. We believe that Adam's disobedience to the revealed will of God, by eating fruit from the only forbidden tree constituted the universal Fall of mankind and the introduction of sin and death into the world. We believe that a nature corrupted by Adam's sin has been transmitted to all men of all ages, Jesus Christ being the only exception. Thus, we believe that all men are sinners by nature, by choice, and by divine declaration. We believe that as a result of the Fall, all men are without any capacity to merit the favor of God. Therefore, we believe that man's salvation is wholly of God's grace through the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ³⁴.

Section 5. Salvation

We believe that salvation is the act of God whereby He rescues man from judgment and spiritual death and delivers him to eternal life. Salvation is based on God's grace alone, through faith in the sacrificial death and shed blood of Jesus Christ alone, to the glory of God alone, and not on any human merit or works³⁵. We believe that God, before the foundation of the world, graciously chose in Jesus Christ for salvation all those He foreknew³⁶. We believe that He graciously saves anyone who, by faith, repents of his sin and believes on the Lord Jesus Christ³⁷.

30 Genesis 1:24-2:1; Colossians 1:16

31 Genesis 2:7, 21-22; Job 32:8; Psalm 8:4-8

32 Genesis 2:18-25; Leviticus 18:22; Romans 1:26-28; Hebrews 13:4

33 Psalm 139:13-16; Ecclesiastes 12:7; Zechariah 12:1; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

34 Genesis 3:1-24; 8:21; Psalm 14:1-3; 143:2; Ecclesiastes 7:20; Isaiah 64:6; Jeremiah 13:23; 17:9; John 3:36; Romans 1:18; 3:9-18, 23; 5:10-12; Ephesians 4:17-19

35 John 1:12; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19

36 Romans 8:28-30; 1 Corinthians 1:26-29; Ephesians 1:4-5, 11; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Timothy 1:9; 1 Peter 1:1-2

37 John 1:12; 3:16; 5:24; Acts 16:31; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 Peter 1:18-19

We believe that at salvation God instantaneously imparts divine life to the new believer (a spiritual reality known as regeneration or the new birth)³⁸. We believe that God declares the new believer completely righteous (a spiritual reality known as justification) based on faith in Christ alone³⁹. We believe that God restores His favor to the repentant sinner, abolishes the penalty of sin (which is death), and imputes Christ's righteousness to the new believer⁴⁰. We believe that the gift of salvation, once received, is forever and cannot be lost⁴¹, and that genuine believers persevere to the end, thus evidencing that they possess eternal life⁴².

We believe that at salvation God sets the new believer apart unto Himself and declares him holy (a spiritual reality known as sanctification) irrespective of his spiritual attainments⁴³. We believe that sanctification is the work of the Holy Spirit that gradually transforms the believer's life, empowering him to become more and more like Jesus Christ — a continual process in which holiness and righteousness are increased and in which sinful attitudes and practices are decreased. Sanctification is characterized by the believer's refusal to conform to this world and by the renewal of his mind as he reads and obeys the revealed will of God⁴⁴. We believe that because sanctification is a lifelong process, the believer will continue to struggle with sin every day of his earthly life⁴⁵.

Section 6. The Church

We believe that the church is a spiritual organism made up of all true born again believers in this present age and can refer to a local assembly of believers or to all believers worldwide⁴⁶. We believe that every person who believes in Christ as Savior is immediately placed (baptized) into the church, which represents Jesus Christ on earth as His Body⁴⁷. We believe that the purpose of the church is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, edify believers, and evangelize the world⁴⁸. We believe that Christ commanded the observance of two church ordinances: the baptism of believers by immersion in water and the

38 John 3:5-8; 5:24; Titus 3:5

39 Romans 3:22-26; 4:23-25; 5:18-21; 8:33

40 Romans 5:12-14; 6:23; 8:16-17; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 3:26

41 John 6:37-40; 10:28-29; Romans 8:38-39; 1 Peter 1:5

42 Philippians 1:6; 2 Timothy 1:12; Hebrews 3:14; 1 John 5:13

43 1 Corinthians 1:2, 30; 6:11; Colossians 1:2; 2 Thessalonians 2:13

44 Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:23-24; 1 John 3:4-9

45 John 17:17, 19; Romans 6:13-7:1; 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Galatians 5:17; Colossians 3:8-13; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 1 John 2:15-17; 2 John 9-11

46 Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:22-23; Philemon 1:1-2

47 1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 1:22-23

48 Matthew 28:19-20; Ephesians 3:20-21; Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Peter 2:9

Lord's Supper⁴⁹, neither of which is efficacious for salvation.

Because the authority of the church rests solely in the authority of Jesus Christ, we believe in the autonomy of the local church, free from any external authority or control, with the right of self-government independent from any hierarchy of individuals or organizations⁵⁰.

We believe that each local church is responsible for its own doctrinal purity and practice, unity⁵¹, discipline of members⁵², appointing of officers, ordaining men into the Gospel ministry, and determining the extent and method of interchurch cooperation⁵³. We believe that the congregation is to participate in the work of the ministry while in submission to the godly rule of its leaders⁵⁴.

Section 7. Future Events

Death, Resurrection, and Judgment

We believe that physical death is the separation of a person's immaterial soul and spirit from their material body⁵⁵, and when that separation occurs, even though the body is dead, there is no loss of immaterial consciousness, whether the person is a believer or an unbeliever⁵⁶. We believe in the bodily resurrection of all people, believers to eternal life and unbelievers to judgment and eternal punishment⁵⁷. We believe that the soul and spirit of the New Testament believer passes immediately into the presence of Christ and remains separated from his body until Christ returns, at which time the believer's body is resurrected a glorified body and reunited with his soul and spirit to be forever with the Lord⁵⁸. We believe that at death the soul and spirit of the unbeliever is kept in a state of conscious punishment and torment in hell until resurrected for judgment, at which time the unbeliever's resurrected body will be reunited with his soul and spirit and be punished forever, cut off from life with God, a just retribution for his sinful deeds⁵⁹.

49 Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 11:23-25

50 Titus 1:5

51 Ephesians 4:1-6; Philippians 2:1-4; 1 Timothy 3:15; 1 John 4:1; Jude 3

52 Matthew 18:15-17; 1 Corinthians 5:4-5; 5:12-6:5; 2 Corinthians 2:6; 2 Thessalonians 3:6

53 Acts 6:3-5; 13:3; 15:1-30; 2 Timothy 2:2

54 Matthew 18:17; Acts 6:5; 1 Corinthians 5:4-7, 13; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17

55 James 2:26

56 Luke 16:19-31; 2 Corinthians 5:8; Revelation 6:9-11

57 Daniel 12:2; John 5:29; 6:49-51; 11:25-26; Romans 8:11; 2 Corinthians 4:14; Revelation 20:13-15

58 Luke 23:43; John 5:28-29; 14:1-3; Philippians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:8; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17

59 Matthew 25:41-46; Luke 16:19-26; John 5:28-29; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:13-15

The Rapture, Tribulation, Second Coming, and Eternity

We believe in the literal, personal and bodily return of Jesus Christ to the earth in two events⁶⁰. We believe He will return to remove His church from the earth to meet Him in the air in an event called the rapture, at which time He will receive to Himself the resurrected bodies of all those who have “died in Christ” and will also translate (change from mortal into immortal) the bodies of all those who are “alive in Christ”⁶¹. We believe that in the last days, during a period of time called the tribulation, God will pour out His righteous judgments on an unbelieving world that will bring death to most, but eternal life to many who will finally embrace the good news of the Gospel⁶². We believe that Christ will physically return to the earth’s surface (an event known as His second coming), at which time He will judge the living and the dead⁶³, and that He will reign over the entire earth for a literal 1,000-year period, known as the millennium, after which He will execute another, final judgment⁶⁴. We believe that the elements of this present heaven and earth will be dissolved and replaced with a new heaven and new earth where only righteousness dwells, and that the saints of all ages will dwell there and forever enjoy fellowship with God and one another, while unbelievers of all ages will suffer eternal punishment in the lake of fire⁶⁵.

Article 5 – Membership

Section 1. Requirements for Members

1. The candidate must be born again and give satisfactory evidence of this to the board of elders.
2. The candidate must be at least 18 years of age.
3. The candidate must have been baptized by immersion since being born again.
4. The candidate must adhere to the Statement of Faith (Article 4) and support the policies and spirit of Fellowship Bible Church as set forth in this document.
5. The candidate must support the ministry of the pastor(s) and elders.

60 Matthew 24:27-31; Acts 1:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Titus 2:13; Revelation 19:11-16

61 John 14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:51-54; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 4:15-5:10

62 Daniel 9:24-27; 12:1; Matthew 24:4-31; 2 Thessalonians 2:3-12; Revelation 16

63 Daniel 12:2-3; Matthew 25:31-46; Revelation 20:4-6

64 John 5:26-29; Acts 17:30-31; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Revelation 20:11-15

65 John 17:3; Ephesians 5:5; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 20:11-22:5

6. The candidate must relinquish prior church membership, and all memberships in lodges, secret societies, and religious organizations that are not in full agreement with the Statement of Faith (Article 4).

Section 2. Procedure for Becoming a Member

1. A person desirous of becoming a member shall contact one of the elders.
2. The elders shall interview the candidate.
3. The board of elders shall approve or disapprove the candidate based on the requirements in Section 1.
4. If approved, the candidate's name shall be announced from the pulpit, and the congregation encouraged to get to know the candidate. If anyone in the congregation is aware of any issue that would prohibit the candidate's admission to membership, he or she should contact one of the elders privately.
5. The candidate shall be accepted for membership and be presented before the church to receive "the right hand of fellowship"⁶⁶. If a valid issue is discovered that prevents membership, the board of elders shall withdraw the candidate's name until the matter is resolved.

Section 3. Duties of Members

Each member is expected to support the services and activities of Fellowship Bible Church, and to maintain a testimony that will support the convictions, attitudes, policies, and spirit of the church by prayer, giving, and service. Each member is expected to attend church business meetings. Each member is expected to submit to the authority of the leadership that God has established over the church⁶⁷. Each member is expected not to teach or promote anything contrary to what Fellowship Bible Church teaches as defined in the document, "What We Teach".

Section 4. Classifications of Members

1. **Active Members** are those who, to the best of their ability, actively support and participate in this church's ministry by their attendance, financial giving, and service through the exercise of their spiritual gifts. They shall be entitled to vote.
2. **Non-quorum Active Members** are those who for legitimate reasons, by approval of the board of elders, cannot normally attend church business meetings. Such members shall not be counted in matters of a quorum. They shall be entitled to vote; however,

66 Galatians 2:9

67 Hebrews 13:17

when voting they shall be counted as part of the quorum. These members shall be returned to the active list when conditions allow them to resume attendance at church business meetings.

Section 5. Dismissal of Members

1. A person shall be dismissed from membership at the member's written request or if the member is deceased.
2. The board of elders shall review the church membership at least annually to determine if any members are not fulfilling their membership duties. That would include, infrequent attendance at services, obvious regular attendance at another church, and unsupportive actions or attitudes. The elders shall contact these members and encourage them to renew their interest and participation. Such members who do not show renewed interest may be dismissed from membership by a vote of the board of elders and given proper notification.
3. All persons dismissed from membership and the reason for dismissal shall be announced to the congregation. Dismissed members may not appeal to the membership or any court of law regarding their dismissal or the public statement concerning their dismissal.
4. Re-admission to membership is according to the procedure for becoming a member (Article 5, Section 2).

Section 6. Non-members

We do not believe that any church organization should hinder Christ from using the members of His Body among us for His glory. We believe that all Christians should be exercising their spiritual gifts in the local church for the building up of the Body of Christ, and for the advancement of His kingdom⁶⁸. Therefore, we permit non-members to serve in non-official capacities as long as they satisfy the following criteria:

1. Exhibit clear evidence of salvation.
2. Submission to this Constitution and By-Laws.
3. Support the ministry of the pastor(s) and elders.
4. Interview and approval by those who oversee the ministry.
5. Not teaching or promoting anything contrary to what Fellowship Bible Church teaches.

68 Ephesians 4:11-12

Non-members may not hold any official office, however, since holding office requires membership in accordance with state laws. Each non-member who voluntarily attends this church, whether serving or not, is expected to submit to the authority of the leadership that God has established over the church⁶⁹.

Article 6 – Discipline

1. The matter of discipline shall be the responsibility of the board of elders. Both members and non-members who regularly attend Fellowship Bible Church are subject to discipline.
2. The purpose of discipline is to restore an errant believer and to preserve the testimony and fellowship of the church.
3. Examples of reasons for church discipline are:
 - a) Causing or supporting schism in the church by advocating doctrinal, moral, or philosophical beliefs contrary to the Scripture.
 - b) Persisting in a course of personal conduct that is contrary to the Scripture.
 - c) Slander, gossip, an accusatory spirit, abusiveness, or refusal to submit to the board of elders.
4. If discipline is warranted, the church shall follow the disciplinary principles as prescribed in Matthew 18:15-20, 1 Corinthians 5, Galatians 6:1-2 and 2 Thessalonians 3:6-15. Those who refuse to repent shall be placed on church discipline by a vote of the board of elders, and the church shall be notified of this action.
5. Those on church discipline will be prohibited from partaking in communion, from a voice in church meetings, and from giving a public testimony until and unless they repent.
6. Any member who has been placed on church discipline may not request termination of membership. If they refuse to repent, they shall be removed from church membership by a vote of the board of elders.
7. Any accusation of sin against an elder shall be presented in person by two or more witnesses to the board of elders⁷⁰.
8. Any officer (Article 8) whose actions are worthy of discipline may be removed from office by a three-fourths vote of a quorum (Article 7, Section 1, Item 6) if the board of elders does not take proper disciplinary action. Officers being voted on for such disciplinary action and their spouses may not vote. Such dismissal

⁶⁹ Hebrews 13:17

⁷⁰ 1 Timothy 5:19

of an officer does not have to be ratified by the board of elders after congregational action.

9. Any person who is disciplined may not appeal to the membership or any court of law regarding their discipline or the public statement concerning their discipline.

Article 7 – Government

Section 1. Business Meetings

1. Business meetings are the privilege and responsibility of the members of Fellowship Bible Church. Anyone may attend the business meetings of this church but only church members may participate and vote.
2. The secretary shall notify the entire membership of every church business meeting at least 15 days before the meeting. This notice shall be read to the congregation at least one Sunday before the meeting.
3. Robert's Rules of Order shall be the parliamentary guide for all business meetings of the church unless this Constitution and ByLaws specifically defines another procedure.
4. The annual meeting of this church shall be held within two months of the close of the fiscal year on a date determined by the board of elders. The purpose of the annual meeting is to approve officers and transact any other business connected with the corporate affairs of the church. The church books shall be audited annually and a report submitted.
5. Special church business meetings may be called by a pastor, the board of elders, or at the request of the membership by a petition signed by at least half the membership without the usually required 15-day notice. A quorum at such meetings, however, will require two-thirds of the active membership. Conducting a special church business meeting must be approved by a vote of three-fourths of the members present as the first item of business at the meeting.
6. Quorum
 - a) For any business meeting to proceed there must be a quorum present. One-half of the active church members must be present to constitute a quorum. A majority vote is required to pass a motion.
 - b) In the following cases, two-thirds of the active church membership must be present for the meeting to proceed, and a three-fourths vote is required to pass a motion for:

- Calling or releasing a pastor
 - Changing affiliation
 - Consolidation with another ministry
 - Dissolving the corporation
 - Purchase or sale of real estate
 - Approval of mortgages
 - Amendments of this Constitution and By-Laws.
 - The discipline of an officer (Article 8)
 - Removal of the place of worship
 - Special church meetings
7. In cases where a member cannot attend a church meeting but wishes to express his vote at the meeting, a means will be provided for him to cast his vote.

Approval of Officers (Article 8)

1. According to New Testament principles, officers of Fellowship Bible Church will be appointed, not elected⁷¹. They will be appointed by the board of elders and then voted on by the church. The purpose of the church vote is to glean the collective wisdom God has given to the assembly. Leaders are not infallible and a unified membership is a good indication of God's leading. The vote of any member is an important responsibility and an opportunity to express the wisdom and discernment God has given to him for the benefit of the Body in general⁷².
2. In the case of unexpected vacancies, the board of elders may appoint a replacement until the next annual meeting, at which time the appointee must be approved by a church vote. All expired terms are subject to re-approval at the annual meeting.
3. No nominations shall be made from the membership during church business meetings.
4. The board of elders shall act as a nomination committee and shall consider all recommendations for officers submitted by church members. They shall post the names of nominees 15 days prior to the church business meeting at which the membership shall vote to approve or disapprove each nominee. All officers (Article 8) shall be members in good standing. Non-members may serve on committees or in other capacities as long as they are approved by the board of elders (Article V, Section 6).

71 Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

72 1 Corinthians 12:18-27

The terms of office are as follows:

Elders	indefinite
Pastors	indefinite
Moderator	annually
Vice-Moderator	annually
Deacons	3 years
Deaconesses	3 years

Article 8 – Officers

Section 1. Elders

The board of elders is the ruling body of this church⁷³. Preferably, and biblically, there should be a plurality of elders. The number of elders shall be limited only by the number of qualified men who desire the office⁷⁴. Elders shall be active members of the church and meet the qualifications stated in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9. Elders are automatically members of all committees and boards with the power to attend and vote at their discretion.

1. An elder shall be released from his office upon receipt of his written resignation or upon the vote of the board of elders. Any accusation of sin against an elder shall be presented in person by two or more witnesses to the board of elders⁷⁵.
2. A pastor shall be chairman of the board of elders. If there are multiple pastors, the board of elders shall, by vote, determine the chairman. If the chairman is absent another pastor will serve as chairman. If all pastors are absent an elder chosen by the board will serve as chairman.
3. The secretary of the board of elders shall also serve as secretary of the church.
4. The responsibilities of the board of elders include:
 - a. Promoting the spiritual life of the church and being examples to the congregation in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity.
 - b. Teaching, shepherding and caring for the congregation⁷⁶.
 - c. Approving all doctrine taught within this church.
 - d. Ratifying all business transacted by a church meeting.
 - e. Receiving and evaluating written reports from each board

⁷³ Acts 20:17, 28; Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Timothy 5:17; 1 Peter. 5:1-2

⁷⁴ 1 Timothy 3:1, Titus 1:5

⁷⁵ 1 Timothy 5:19

⁷⁶ Acts 20:28; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 4:6; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:2-3

and committee within the church and making whatever recommendations they deem necessary.

- f. Approving all new organizations formed within the church.
- g. Approving all methods of raising finances.
- h. Approving all gifts to the church, reserving the right to reject any they judge not conducive to a consistent scriptural testimony of the church.
- i. Administering the church ordinances.
- j. Reviewing the church membership roll at least annually.
- k. Recommending church officers for appointment to the annual meeting.
- l. Overseeing the selection of pastoral candidates.
- m. Having discretionary charge over the Fellowship Fund – funds that are collected for the benefit of the needy, especially those in the congregation – and giving an account for it at the annual meeting.
- n. Arranging for the duties of the pastors when they are absent or ill.
- o. Carrying out discipline whenever necessary in accord with Article 6.
- p. Ensuring that a written report describing the status of Fellowship Bible Church is submitted to the membership at the annual church meeting.
- q. Ensuring that all financial records are audited annually and that a written financial report is submitted to the membership at the annual church meeting.
- r. Acting in the capacity of trustees, the board of elders shall have custody of and administer the property of the church both real and personal, now and hereafter conveyed, donated, assigned, devised, or bequeathed to the church corporation. By their vote they may designate, appoint, authorize, and empower the church secretary, church treasurer, one of the members of the board or any member of the church for, on behalf of, or in the name of the church to make, execute, seal with the corporate seal, acknowledge, and deliver in deed or other instrument necessary or required to buy, sell, mortgage, or transfer and convey title to such property, real or personal. Such board shall not have power or authority to remove the place of worship to any other place whatsoever. Removal of

the place of worship shall require a vote of two thirds of the members of the corporation and ratification by the board of elders. Further restrictions are stated in Article 2 wherein a threefourths vote of the church membership is required.

- s. Ensuring that the church is properly represented in all legal matters.
- t. Deciding upon the usage of the church buildings and properties and ensuring that they are maintained.
- u. Ensuring that adequate insurance is provided for church properties and personnel.
- v. Overseeing all finances, budgets, and ensuring that accurate records are kept.

Section 2. Pastors

Pastors are leaders among the church leadership⁷⁷. They are fulltime elders who are supported by the church and are members of the church staff. If there are multiple pastors in this church, one shall be designated the Senior Pastor and the others as Assistant Pastors. As elders, pastors must fulfill all the requirements and responsibilities of elders.

Section 2.1 Calling or Releasing a Pastor

- a. In the event of a vacancy in a pastor's office, the board of elders shall seek out and recommend pastoral candidates to the congregation. One candidate shall be considered at a time. After substantial consideration and prayer, the congregation shall vote using written ballots.
- b. A pastor shall be released from his office upon receipt of his written resignation or by vote of the membership upon recommendation from the board of elders because it has been determined that he has disqualified himself from the office⁷⁸. Any accusation of sin against a pastor shall be presented in person by two or more witnesses to the board of elders⁷⁹.
- c. In the case of resignation, a pastor must give a three-month notice of termination of duties unless he and the board of elders can work out some other mutually agreeable plan. If a pastor is voted out of office, he shall be dismissed immediately from all pulpit, pastoral, and administrative duties. The termination of his salary shall be left to the discretion of the board of elders. Any pastor whose actions merit disciplinary action may not voluntarily resign.

77 Ephesians 4:11-12

78 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:6-9

79 1 Timothy 5:17-19

Section 2.2 Pastoral Responsibilities

- a. **Senior Pastor** - The Senior Pastor shall be the leader among the pastors and elders of this church. He shall, first and foremost, be responsible for preaching and teaching the Word of God⁸⁰. He shall, in cooperation with the board of elders, shepherd the congregation, pray for the congregation, maintain spiritual and administrative oversight over the church, lead the church in all of its activities, and direct the spiritual pace and programs of the church. He shall issue any certificates deemed necessary.
- b. **Assistant Pastors** - The pastors, in agreement with the board of elders, shall determine the duties of an assistant pastor.

Section 3. Moderator & Vice-Moderator

The board of elders shall recommend to the church meeting annually for approval one man as Moderator and one man as Vice-Moderator. Both shall be members of Fellowship Bible Church. The responsibility of the Moderator is to conduct all church meetings in accordance with Article 7 of this document. In the absence of the Moderator, the ViceModerator shall assume his responsibility.

Section 4. Deacons & Deaconesses

The Scripture shows us that deacons and deaconesses are not rulers but servantleaders working within the church to assist the elders in the ministry⁸¹. Therefore, those who serve in this office will serve under the oversight of an elder in their appropriate segment of ministry. Their qualifications are given in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. The board of elders is responsible for creating offices to be filled by deacons and deaconesses as the need arises.

Article 9 – Administrators

Administrators have oversight over a given segment of the ministry of Fellowship Bible Church. The board of elders is responsible for creating, filling and terminating administrative positions, and the appointment and release of Administrators to fill these positions. Some examples are, but are not limited to, Business Administrator, School Administrator and Mission Administrator. Administrators must be members of Fellowship Bible Church. They may be paid or unpaid members of the staff. Administrators shall be approved by a vote of the membership (normal quorum) before assuming

80 Titus 1:9; 2 Timothy 4:1-15

81 Acts 6:1-6

their responsibilities. Administrators are under the authority and supervision of the Senior Pastor and the board of elders.

Article 10 – Committees & Organizations

1. The board of elders may create whatever committees or organizations within the church that they deem necessary.
2. A church member may sponsor the creation of a committee or organization, but only with prior approval by the board of elders.
3. The board of elders shall either appoint or approve suggested nominations of all persons serving on such groups.
4. Such groups shall elect their own officers if applicable.
5. All such groups must confer with the board of elders from time to time regarding their plans and activities.
6. Activities scheduled by such groups shall avoid conflicts with scheduled church services unless approved by the board of elders.

Article 11 – Support of Other Christian Ministries

This church shall support evangelistic efforts and educational institutions consistent with its own beliefs and practices. All missionaries supported by this church shall be in full agreement with the Statement of Faith as stated in this document (Article 4) and shall be required to sign a statement of agreement at the discretion of the board of elders.

Article 12 – Dissolution

1. In the event of the dissolution of the corporation, no part of its assets shall be paid or distributed among the members of the congregation, but all such remaining assets after payment of all debts and liabilities shall be transferred to corporations or organizations that are biblically fundamental. Such corporations or organizations may be those which the United States government would term “religious and charitable” in nature. These may but need not qualify under the provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States, then in force and applicable with respect to tax-exempt status.

2. In the event of the dissolution of this corporation, one half of the assets shall be apportioned based on prior year givings to the missionary agencies that received regular contributions from the church in the previous fiscal year.
3. The disposition of the other half of the assets shall be decided upon at the time of the dissolution of this corporation.
4. In the case of schism within the congregation, all property shall go to that group which adheres to the Statement of Faith (Article 4). In the case of schism where differing groups adhere to the Statement of Faith (Article 4), all property shall go to that group which is not proposing any change to the ministry, unless such change is affirmed by a three-fourths vote at a church business meeting where two-thirds of the active church membership is present.

Article 13 –Amendments

This document may be amended at any business meeting provided that the membership is notified of the change at least 15 days prior to the meeting.

